



**Executive
11th December 2006**

**Report from the Director of
Policy and Regeneration**

Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Brent Local Area Agreement -
six month progress report**

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-06/07-006

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report up-dates the Executive on the process and information required for the six month review and the annual refresh of the Local Area Agreement. It introduces the report prepared for the review of the first six months of the LAA submitted to GOL and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on 10th November 2006. It also covers proposals to comply with the annual 're-fresh' process for the LAA.

1.2 The report covers the following issues:-

- The information prepared for the six-month review submission on this agenda as 'Brent's Local Area Agreement – Six month review'
- Actions required for the annual 're-fresh' of the LAA.

2. Recommendations.

Members of the Executive are recommended to:-

- 2.1 Note the process and information prepared for the DCLG six-month review of LAA performance.
- 2.2 Agree the proposed actions detailed at paragraph 3.9 for preparing for the annual re-fresh of the LAA and the need to create greater clarity and focus on the priority LAA outcomes which reflect the aims and objectives of the agreed Corporate Strategy 2006-2010.

3. Detail

The Six-month review of the LAA

3.1 Each LAA is required to undertake a six month review with their Government Office, the evidence from which is then submitted to the DCLG. The DCLG has provided specific guidance on the nature of the evidence to be presented and the timetable for completing the six-month review. The purpose of the review is to assess the progress being made and any initial impact from the LAA. It will be conducted by means of submission of evidence and a roundtable meeting of GOL and key LAA partners.

3.2 The core evidence required for the six-month review should include:-

- a) A brief overview narrative, structured to reflect the key outcomes within the individual LAA, which highlights any particularly good performance and/or innovative ideas which are developing, and any problems and how they are being or might be resolved.
- b) The actual performance data including baselines and targets
- c) Simple visual devices such as traffic lighting to show direction of travel and progress.
- d) Agree actions to address under-performance and any appropriate support required from GOL.
- e) Compare spend against profile for the stretch targets and pooled budgets.

The six-month review specifically excludes the renegotiation of targets, stretch targets or enabling measures.

3.3 Brent was required to submit evidence for the six-monthly review to Government Office for London by 10th November 2006 and there will be a round table meeting with representatives from the Partnership and GOL on 6th December 2006 to review progress. As a result of the review each LAA will be given a 'Red, Amber or Green' rating based upon the likely risk of not delivering their specified outcomes.

3.4 At this six month stage it is recognised that actual changes in performance may be limited however discussions with GOL and other round 2 LAA have shown that it is important to demonstrate the management structures that have been put in place to enable the LAA to be effective in years 2 and 3. This is the experience of Round 1 LAA's, that time invested at an early stage in performance management and governance arrangements create a firm foundation for the future operation of the LAA. The narrative for Brent's review focuses specifically on the actions we have taken to strengthen governance and performance arrangements and the establishment of the programmes to deliver the stretch targets and headline outcomes.

3.5 The report 'Brent's Local Area Agreement – Six month review' is attached and outlines the progress made since the signing of the LAA in March 2006.

Annual Re-refresh process.

3.6 The DCLG requires that each LAA partnership undertakes an annual re-refresh of its priorities and outcomes to be implemented from 2007/08 onwards. This procedure is to ensure that the outcomes and targets remain appropriate and any new national LAA requirements are integrated into existing LAA's delivery frameworks. The process for annual re-refresh requires Brent's LAA partnership to incorporate the following elements:-

- LAA guidance for 2007/08 for round 3 which contains new elements which all LAA's (rounds 1, 2 and 3) must include from 2007/08, largely related to new mandatory targets to be included within the outcomes framework.
- New nationally designed enabling measures that can be incorporated where appropriate for 2007/08.
- New funding streams – the new guidance sets out additional funding streams which can be pooled or will be pooled automatically centrally.

Brent's LAA Partnership is required to submit proposals for a re-refreshed outcomes framework and supporting delivery documentation by 5th January 2007 for implementation from April 2007.

3.7 While many may feel that it is very early in the life of the LAA to be reviewing the priorities and outcomes, the re-refresh process does provide an opportunity to bring greater focus and clarity to the future delivery of the Brent LAA programme and in particular to reflect the new Administrations Corporate Strategy priorities. For a number of laudable reasons Brent's initial LAA submission in March 2006 contained by far the most expansive outcomes framework in Rounds 1 and 2 with over 200 measures and targets. Experience over the first six months has shown this number of outcome measures is generating a lack of focus and difficulties in directing sustained management resources to the most important community outcomes. These concerns have been discussed with GOL who have in principal supported the proposal that Brent use the re-refresh process to rationalise the outcomes framework to 40-50 critical measures which reflect the priorities in the six headline outcomes of the LAA submission. With the inclusion of the new 2007/08 mandatory indicators this will give a set of approximately 70 key indicators. This will bring Brent's LAA more inline with the scale and scope of comparable authorities.

3.8 In order to take forward the process of the annual LAA re-refresh the Executive are asked to endorse the following proposals.

3.9 Brent's LAA is already considered by GOL and DCLG to be one of the most ambitious and expansive of the LAA's agreed so far. As demonstrated by the six month review, encouraging progress is already being made in the majority of headline outcomes and stretch targets. We would strongly recommend that it would not be productive at this stage to attempt to initiate significantly more new projects within the LAA framework. We would therefore propose that a maximum of 5 new areas

should be identified as part of the re-fresh and that these should consolidate and compliment the existing body of work within the LAA.

3.10 During the course of preparing the six month review evidence and following informal discussions with partners the following areas have been proposed for development work as part of the re-fresh. The areas identified are also consistent with the priorities in the new Council Corporate Strategy 2006-2010:-

- Longer, Healthier Lives – identifying actions to support the implementation of the Brent Health Strategy post April 2007. These would be focused on the preventative agenda and work with local community groups on promoting healthy life styles.
- Early Success – extending the best practice emerging from the Stonebridge early intervention programme to a borough-wide approach aimed at supporting parenting capacity for children aged 8-10 and their families.
- Initiatives to promote the long-term independence and health of older people and encourage their active inclusion in the life of the local community.
- Supporting the development of effective communications networks within the voluntary and community sector.

3.11 We have also recently made external funding bids for a new projects which if successful will be aligned to the aims of the LAA. This is the mediation service project:-

- A bid to the Invest to Save – Inclusive Communities Budget for the establishment of a borough mediation service to reduce conflict and prevent escalation of conflict into violent crime. A decision on this is anticipated in early January 2007.

3.12 In addition to initiating these new projects we will continue to explore the options for the more effective use of the centrally and locally pooled budgets, which is currently an area of underdevelopment within the Brent LAA.

3.13 If the Executive supports these priorities for year 2 of the LAA we will undertake detailed discussions with the partners on the relevant Strategic Partnership groups. Together with a rationalisation of the LAA outcomes framework this will form the basis of the refresh for submission to GOL in January 2007.

3.14 In January 2007 we will start detailed planning on the agreed new projects to commence from April 2007 and there will be a further round of Star Chambers to review funding provision for LAA projects.

3.15 Members of the Executive are requested to comment on the proposed year 2 additional priorities and the process for completing the re-fresh of the LAA for 2007/08.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The LAA contains 12 stretch targets on which the council and its partners have committed to achieving enhanced performance. If successful in achieving these stretch targets by April 2009 the partnership would be eligible for up to £9M in performance reward grant to be paid in the financial year 2010.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6. Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The LAA agreement is specifically focused on addressing issues of diversity and inequality. These are covered by the individual projects detailed in the attached progress report.

7. Background

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